

tion, predators and parasites); individual species accounts of the great whales; and finally, conservation and management, and the future. A glossary ranges from archaic whaling terms to modern technical terms.

The style is terse and to the point, illustrated with graphs and tables relating to salient points in the text, black and white historical images, and excellent colour photos of each species provided by experienced researchers. Much of the material reflects Bannister's membership of the close-knit Western Australian whale research community, and refers to much current research, with a large amount of information on humpback whales, Bannister's main research species. Not surprisingly, there is not so much

detail about research conducted in other parts of Australia, where he does not work. Some species such as fin, sei and Bryde's whales are rarely sighted in Australian waters, while humpback, southern right, blue and sperm whales are perhaps the species about which most is known.

This easily readable book is a useful addition to the library of students and whale enthusiasts.

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## Cronin's Key Guide to Australian Wildflowers

by Leonard Cronin

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Australia has some of the most beautiful flowers in the world, a fact well illustrated in this fourth book of Cronin's Key Guides. Over 590 wildflowers from all over Australia are described. This constitutes less than 2% of Australia's flora but it introduces the reader to the major families of the Australian flowering plants, and highlights some of the more unique as well as some of the more common species. Scientific terms are kept at a minimum, thus plant descriptions can be easily understood by the novice as well as more experienced plant enthusiasts. The few botanical terms used are explained in a glossary at the back of the book. The habit or form of the plant, key leaf and flower characteristics, and flowering periods are succinctly described. Both scientific and common names are provided, and the accompanying distribution maps allow one to plan trysts with the seductive Bower of Beauty, Dusky Bush Pea or Horny Cone Bush.

The book has been designed as a straightforward and easy to follow field guide. Flowers



with similar shapes are grouped together and a key to flower shapes is provided, with page numbers indicating where plants with such flowers can be found in the book. At the recommended retail price of \$35.00, this book is an ideal travelling companion when touring Australia, or simply for familiarisation with Australia's unique and intriguing wildflowers.

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